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Tomorrow



Veteran journalist, M J Zahedi, a former News Editor of the erstwhile Pakistan Observer and the Dawn and later the founder-editor of the Khaleej Times (Dubai) returns to journalism in Bangladesh after an absence of three decades. His commentary on the development in Pakistan appears in this paper tomorrow, exclusively for Bangladesh. Do not miss it!

NEWS BRIEFS

Biman employees postpone programme

The employees and officers of Biman Bangladesh Airlines ended their agitation for a new pay-scale as the management resolved the issue to the satisfaction of all the parties, according to a press release of Biman issued on Tuesday. But a spokesman for the employees told The Daily Star that they had postponed their programmes for two days to see how the management acts on its assurances, reports our Staff Correspondent.

Response positive, Col Hasan tells Daily Star

Dhaka asks Yangon to pull back troops, repatriate refugees

From Nurul Alam

TEKNAF (Cox's Bazar), Jan 28: Bangladesh has asked Myanmar to take back the refugees who have fled to escape ill-treatment in their homeland.

Dhaka also wants Yangon to withdraw its troops from the frontier.

Border officials from the two countries met today for the third time since the escalation of tension following December 21 attack on a Bangladesh border outpost by Myanmar troops. The attack left two Bangladesh nationals

dead and another 27 injured. The third round of talks was held at a Lunthin (border security force of Myanmar) bungalow, perched atop a scenic hill at Mongdu of Myanmar, about 10 kilometres off here.

The 20-member Bangladesh team, including two television crew from BTV, was led by Lt Col Ali Hasan, Chittagong Sector Commander of BDR.

Col Kayser Nyo Chit Fe, western zone commander of Myanmar army headed the 17-member Myanmar side.

He was assisted by Lt Col Sun Lwin and Lt Col Myint-oo, both from the Lunthin border security force based in Rakhaine province (formerly Arakan).

The Bangladesh team crossed the Naf channel at 8-30 in the morning and arrived at the Lunthin rest house at Mongdu after a nine-kilometre jeep ride.

The meeting which began at 10 am lasted till 3-45 pm. The delegation returned to Teknaf at 4-45 in the afternoon.

On return from talks, the BDR commander told The Daily Star that the meeting had taken place in a "very warm and cordial atmosphere."

"Positive response was received from the other side during the discussion," Lt Col Hasan said.

The agenda of the meeting included continued troops build-up by the Myanmar authorities along the border, air space violation by the Myanmar airforce, violation of ground rules, the December 21 attack

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Saudi Prince Saud Al Faisal who heads the Saudi delegation at the Middle East multilateral talks in Moscow, arrived for the first day of meeting yesterday. —AFP photo

Palestinian, 2 major Arab teams boycott ME talks

MOSCOW, Jan 28: The first round of multilateral talks on the Middle East ended here today and were to resume Wednesday when senior officials are to gather to chart the future course of the negotiations, reports AFP.

US Secretary of State James Baker told the closing session that peace was the responsibility of all regional parties and that it was up to them to help forge a settlement to the Middle East conflict.

Tuesday's plenary session was marred by the absence of the Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian delegations, the latter boycotting it over a row on representation and the first two because of Israel's continued occupation of Arab territory.

Baker and his counterparts from Russia, Jordan, Canada, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as a representative of the European Community addressed the opening session.

Another report says, Baker has proposed a compromise to secure Palestinian participation at peace talks, Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi disclosed Tuesday.

She said the delegation would study the proposal, which would allow Palestinians from outside the Israeli-occupied territories to take part in committee dis-

cussions on regional issues. We will seriously examine it and give a constructive reply, Ashrawi said.

But has stressed that her team had not received anything in writing from Baker.

Ashrawi was responding to reported remarks earlier by Baker that Washington would support a role for Palestinians from the diaspora at an appropriate moment.

The Palestinian team boycotted the opening session of multilateral talks to protest a decision by the US and Russian sponsors of the forum to limit their delegation to representatives from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

An Israeli delegation official said Israel considered the reported Baker proposal to be an annoyance.

An American compromise proposal that would allow Palestinians from the diaspora to attend commission work on the problem of refugees... would be an annoyance as far as we are concerned, the official said.

AP says, the United States and Russia offered Palestinians a compromise Tuesday that would partially admit them into the Moscow peace talks but the offer was rejected, Secretary of State James Baker said.

Baker said the compromise

would allow Palestinians living outside Israeli-occupied territory to participate in the working group that will start dealing with the refugee problem on Wednesday, the conference's second day.

He told reporters there was 'merit' in the Palestinians' argument that the refugee problem is a broad one.

Three of the eight Palestinians who came to Moscow define themselves as exiles — members of the Palestinian diaspora that grew up after Israel became a state in 1948.

"I think consideration should be given to expanding the Palestinian group," Baker said.

But Baker, with Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of Russia at his side, said the Palestinians had declined the offer, though he still hoped they would reconsider before the working groups — dealing with issues from arms control to water — sharing — assemble on Wednesday.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said in an interview earlier that if the question of Palestinian representation is not resolved, "the conference will come to a halt."

Algeria and Yemen joined the boycott over the Palestinian role, marring the

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Time-limit to deposit arms extended

The government has further extended the time-limit to deposit arms along with the licence with the concerned Deputy Commissioners' office till February 12 next, reports BSS.

A Press Note issued by the Home Ministry Tuesday said, the government took the decision after considering all aspects relating to the deposition of arms along with the licence.

Arms used by the security guards in different banks, government, semi-government and private offices, however, will remain outside the purview of the order.

The government hoped that all concerned would deposit their arms along with the licence by the stipulated time in the interest of public security and to extend the cooperation to government for maintenance of law and order.

The government earlier extended the time-limit to deposit arms till January 25 from January 15.

Three killed in road mishaps

From Our DMCH Correspondent

Three persons were killed in three separate accidents — two in Dhaka and another at Fatullah in Narayanganj.

Liaquat Ali (35), a rickshaw-puller was critically injured, when he was crushed under wheels of a speeding truck (Dhaka N-5882) at 11 pm Monday at Mirpur Section No 2.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries.

Mirpur Thana Police captured the truck managed to escape.

In another incident Mizanur Rahman (31) was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck when he was crossing a road at Pagla Bazar in Narayanganj. He died on the spot.

The driver managed to escape with the truck.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: A rickshawpuller died on the spot when a bus ran over him near the Century Arcade at Mogbazar in the city on Tuesday afternoon.

Ramna police said, a Dhaka University bus hit the rickshaw causing instant death to its puller.

The rickshawpuller could not be identified. His body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue, police said.

JS passes three bills Law for confiscation of ill-gotten property

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) Tuesday unanimously passed a bill amending the Anti-Corruption Act of 1974 providing for a seven-year jail term or fine and confiscation of ill-gotten wealth.

Two other bills were also passed extending the terms of office of the Pourashavas and the Union Parishadas from three to five years and approving the Ordinance terminating the existing pourashavas on December 31 last year.

All amendments to the three bills moved by Oppo-

sition members were rejected by the House.

The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 1992 was passed unanimously following an appeal by Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz requesting the Opposition to withdraw all amendments moved on the bill.

Earlier, moving the bill the Law Minister, while addressing the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad as his "bosom buddy", appealed to the Opposition

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'Swoop on smugglers any time'

By Masud Hasan Khan

Encouraged by its initial success in the nationwide anti-smuggling drive the government is now planning a crackdown on smugglers, highly-placed official sources said Tuesday.

They said that the Home Ministry had prepared a list of alleged smugglers to be targeted in the crackdown, expected to be launched early next month.

"We have the list of notorious smugglers with us. The crackdown will start any day," said an official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The sources said that the concerned authorities were having a close look into the specific charges that would be framed against the persons suspected of being involved in cross-border smuggling.

The list has been prepared on the basis of different lists of

suspected smugglers previously drawn up by a number of law enforcing agencies, they told The Daily Star.

The crackdown that will include arrests of the suspected smugglers is aimed at closing the smuggling routes.

"We have been able to drive out the smuggled goods from the markets inside the country. Now we will catch the 'bigwigs' so that no contraband items can be smuggled into the country — by air, land or sea," said another official.

The bigwigs in smuggling are often disguised as genuine businessmen.

The current anti-smuggling drive was launched on Jan 1 and officials said that they were happy at the success achieved so far.

The first stage of the campaign focused on the contraband items being sold in markets inside the country.

DU VC urges newsmen

Uncover roots of campus violence

Vice-Chancellor Prof Manruzzaman Miah of Dhaka University yesterday urged journalists to unveil the terrorists destroying national institutions like his Dhaka University and undermining the fledgling democracy, reports UNB.

"Terrorism wrecking educational institutions including Dhaka University is bred in a deeprooted conspiracy designed to frustrate the democratic dispensation achieved in the fairest general election I have ever seen," he said.

He was speaking as chief guest at the two-day 17th annual general meeting of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUU) at the National Press Club.

He also called for doing responsible journalism while seeking cooperation of the newsmen in uncovering real source of arms and terrorism.

The VC also urged the journalists to contribute to solving other problems by projecting objective condition of society.

Criticising yellow journalism practised by certain section of the press, he observed the motive of such writings were nothing but to tarnish the image of institutions to the people.

"Distortion of facts and cir-

ulation of baseless and unfounded news merely create confusion."

The Vice-Chancellor viewed the hard-eared democracy was yet to find its solid foundation in society, and urged the opposition to play a constructive role in giving it (democracy) an institutional shape.

"It's not possible for the government alone to discharge these duties properly," he added.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Reazuddin Ahmed, addressing the inaugural session of the meeting, demanded total repeal of the Special Powers Act.

He, however, thanked the government for annulling some parts of the black law that were curbing press freedom.

Reaz also said all restrictions on declarations for publishing newspapers had gone with annulment of the Printing Presses and Publications Act.

He cautioned against "pressure groups" and other factors that thwart freedom of the press to fulfil their evil designs.

BFUJ Secretary General Amanullah Kabir told the function that journalists had fought not only for their bread and butter but also for democracy

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Three sit on Bench today, another goes back to Bar

By Supreme Court Correspondent

Three Additional Judges take oath as Judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court today (Wednesday) while a fourth, dropped as a Judge, returns to the Bar.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed will administer the oath in his chamber to Justice B I Chowdhury, Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque and Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury at about 10 am.

They all were appointed Additional Judges June 29, 1990 for a period of two years.

Meanwhile, Justice Abdul Hasib, dropped as a Judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court returns to the bar. He too was appointed an Additional Judge on January 29, 1990 for a period of two years.

Dr Rafiqur Rahman, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, expressing his reaction on the dropping of Abdul Hasib said, "This is very unfortunate." But he refrained from making any further comment.

The reaction of the Bar on the dropping of Abdul Hasib as a Judge was not clear.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Fazle Hossain

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School, college enrolments increase

The number of students enrolling into educational institutions from primary schools to colleges during 1991 stood at 1,59,56,034. State Minister for Education Professor Yunus Khan told the Jatiya Sangsad Tuesday.

The enrolment figure during the previous year was 1,53,78,972.

Replying to treasury bench member Sadr Shakhawat Hossain Bakul (Narsingdhi), the minister said most of the increase was noticed in the primary schools (by about 4 lakh) and other secondary schools (by about 2 lakh). Professor Khan said total number of teachers serving in these institutions was recorded at 340,371, including 189,508 in the primary schools.

The State Minister said of the 171,598 teachers serving in government educational institutions, primary school teachers constitute nearly nine per cent (158,113). Of the 168,773 teachers serving in non-government schools and colleges, over 85 per cent work in secondary schools (106,185).

Giving a break-up of students, the minister said the

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Govt spending Tk 19,500 for a varsity student per year

By Staff Correspondent

The government spends Taka 19,500 annually for a university student of the country.

This was stated by State Minister for Education Principal Mohammad Yunus Khan in the Jatiya Sangsad on Tuesday. Replying to a question by Rahmat Ali of the Awami League, the State Minister told the House that the government's yearly expenditure (according to the 1989-90 academic year) for a student of the country's seven universities is Taka 19,453.72 on an average.

Answering a supplementary, he said that, in the 1989-90 academic year, the government spent Taka 53,505.22 for a student of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, Taka 25,469.08 for a student of Jahangirnagar University, Taka 24,588.26 for a student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Taka 19,122.48 for a student of Chittagong University, Tk 15,004.50 for a student of Rajshahi University, Tk 14,619.32 for a student of Dhaka University and Tk 1,757.58 for each student of the Islamic University.

The expenditure excludes the development budget allocation for students, the State Minister said.

Dozens injured on sixth day of UP elections

Polling for union parishads were postponed at eight centres yesterday on the sixth day of the 16-day elections following clashes and adoption of unfair means, officials said, reports UNB.

The authorities suspended voting at a centre at Gharjaria union in Sribardi upazila in Sherpur district, two centres of West Jafong union of Goainghat upazila and four centres of Charikhata, Darbast and Fathepur unions of Jointapur upazila in Sylhet and one centre in Sadar upazila of Chandpur district.

Polls were held yesterday in 201 unions of 27 upazilas in 21 districts.

A report from Sherpur said

polling was suspended in Ghonapara centre of Gharjaria union in Sribardi upazila after some rowdy youth snatched away ballot papers. Police arrested, Nedu Mia (35) from near the centre.

Polling at other centres of 10 unions in the upazilas was held peacefully.

A Chandpur reports adds: Authorities suspended polling in Lalpur centre of Bishnupur union in Sadar upazila of the district at about 3 pm today following a clash between rival groups.

Meanwhile, clashes at different union parishad election centres in the Sadar upazila also left at least 25 people in-

jured. Police arrested seven people, including a polling officer.

Of the injured, Fatema (45) and Baset Gazi (35) of Moishdi union were rushed to Chandpur General Hospital with serious wounds.

Police said Hanif Howladar, Shahidullah, Mominul Haque, Badsha Mia, Mohammad Ershad and Mizanur Rahman were arrested from near Shah Mahmudpur Community centre. They were armed with 'teta'.

Mobinul Haque, a polling officer in Ramdia Primary School centre, was arrested for his alleged involvement in rigging. Police also recovered two

hand bombs from Baghdadiganj High School centre during the voting.

Witnesses said at least 20 cocktails were blasted near Miahadi Primary School centre to create panic among the voters. None was reported hurt.

Our Munshiganj Correspondent adds: At least 25 persons including three women were injured in a pre-election violence in Char Dumuria village of Mollakandi Union.

Of the injured, 10 persons were admitted to the Munshiganj Sadar Hospital.

The clash ensued at 11 pm Monday among the supporters of Mostafa Mollah, a member

candidate and Anwar Ali Molla, who was elected chairman unopposed.

In another incident, 14 more were injured Tuesday afternoon when the supporters of Tara Mondal and Mohammad Ali Siddik, two member candidates clashed in Khanka village of Rampal Union.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna adds: Elections in 8 unions under Dakop and 6 unions under Batiathanka were held peacefully.

Dakop has 6 chairman and 253 member candidates while Batiathanka has 35 chairman and 204 member candidates.

UNB from Matjidee Court adds: Mahabubur Rahman Jahangir has been elected as

chairman of 17 Shakchar Union Parishad of Sadar upazila of Lakshimpur district.

He was in the Noakhali jail while contesting five other candidates in the election held on January 25.

A police sub-inspector on duty at Sholagrhatpur Primary School centre of Kichak union in Shibganj upazila in Bogra was injured when some people attacked him in a bid to snatch ballot boxes.

Police opened blank shots to disperse the unruly elements. Polls at the centre however continued without interruption.

Elections will be held in 310 unions of 41 upazilas in 35 districts today (Wednesday).